

TIMANTHES:

A

TRAGEDY.

[Price One Shilling and Sixpence.]

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TRAGEDY.

As it is performed at the

THEATRE ROYAL

IN

COVENT-GARDEN.

BY

JOHN HOOLE.

THE THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed for T. BECKET and Co. in the Strand.

M DCC. LXXI.

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MDCCLXXXII

P R O L O G U E.

Spoken by Mr. BENSLEY.

WHEN first our bard advent'rous left the shore,
To tempt the drama's depth, untry'd before;
With beating heart his trembling sail he rear'd,
While critic sands and envious rocks he fear'd.
But your indulgence swell'd the prosp'rous wind,
And safe convey'd him to the port design'd.
The track, yourselves approv'd, he now pursues,
And for a second trip his care renews.

Of, in the silent hours of teeming thought,
As flatt'ring prospects in his bosom wrought,
Hope imag'd to his sight your starting tear,
And brought the welcome plaudit to his ear!
But while he now revolves that mutual fame
Should join the poet's and the actor's name,
O! let him here one tender tribute pay,
To early worth, untimely snatch'd away!
To HIM, who once, alas! his scene inspir'd,
Whose softness melted, and whose spirit fir'd!
While to the friend this grateful debt he pays,
Each gen'rous breast will sure confirm the praise;
With you, his honest zeal must stand approv'd,
Which makes this off'ring to the man he lov'd!



P R O L O G U E

Spoken by MR. BENJAMIN

WHEN this our bard advent'rous left the shore,
To tempt the dæmon's depth, untimely fate,
With beating heart his trembling lay he down;
While criss'le hands and curious looks he cast;
But your indignance swell'd the prophetic wind,
And late convey'd him to the port of destiny;
The truck, yourselves approve, he now pursues,
And for a second trip his oars heaves.

Oh, in the silent hours of rearing thought,
As floating vapours in his bosom wrought,
He drew a to his light your burning fan;
And brought the welcome phœnix to the land;
But while he now revolves the sacred tale,
Should join the poet's and the actor's name,
O! let him have one tender moment pass,
To early worth, justly his own to pass;
To him, who once, alas! has been the first,
To rise to the height, and with the gods to fight;
While to the land the golden age he brings,
And you will find him in the land of the living;
And you will find him in the land of the living;
And you will find him in the land of the living;

Dramatis Personæ.

DEMOPHOON,	Mr. BENSLEY.
TIMANTHES,	Mr. SMITH.
CHERINTHUS,	Mr. WROUGHTON.
MATHUSIUS,	Mr. CLARKE.
ADRASTUS,	Mr. GARDNER.
ORCANES,	Mr. DAVIS.

OLINTHUS, a Child.

ISMENA,	Mrs. YATES.
CEPHISA,	Mrs. BULKLEY.

Officer, Guards, Attendants;

Chorus of PRIESTS and VIRGINS.

SCENE, Thrace.

Dramatis Personae.

DEMOPHOON,	MR. BENSLY.
TIMANTHES,	MR. SMITH.
CHERINTHUS,	MR. WROUGHTON.
MATHUSIUS,	MR. CLARKE.
ADRASTUS,	MR. GARDNER.
ORCADES,	MR. DAVIS.

OLINTHUS, a Slave.

ISMENA,	Mrs. YATES.
CEPHISA,	Mrs. BUCKLEY.

Officer, Guards, Attendants;

Chorus of Priests and Virgins.

SCENE, Thence.

TIMANTHES:

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TRAGEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE, *The palace.*

Enter ADRASTUS and ORCANES.

ORCANES.

TIMANTHES is arriv'd.

ADRASTUS.

The setting sun

Gilds his returning ensigns.—Great Demophoon
Prepares to welcome home his conquering son,
And meet him with a father's love.

ORCANES.

And yet

Amidst this hour of triumph, sorrow clouds
The splendor of a victor's arms: this eve
Fore-runs a day of sad solemnity.

ADRASTUS.

Orcanes, yes—that sun, whose chearful light
Smiles on the harmless swain, that piping leads

B

His

TIMANTHES:

His flock to fold, must, ere to-morrow's noon,
Behold his altar stain'd with guiltless blood.
Thou know'st long since the oracle requir'd
A virgin's life in annual sacrifice;
And every year, on this returning day,
In solemn rites our weeping Thrace gives up
The melancholy victim.

ORCANES.

Have the priests
Receiv'd the virgins yet, whose names must stand
To-morrow's dreadful chance?

ADRASTUS.

Not yet — and thence
I fear new evils may arise: 'tis whisper'd,
I know not what, of something that portends
Contest and tumult to the state: Mathufius,
'The hoary chief, beneath whose fostering care
Our young Timanthes learn'd the trade of war,
Grown old in toils, an alien to the court,
Now lives sequester'd, since the king displeas'd
Recall'd him from command, and in his stead
Left his brave son to guide the Thracian files:
Retir'd he dwells, where on the city's skirts
The sea in tempests breaks; or where, in calms,
Its glassy waves reflect the trembling towers;
With him resides his daughter fair Ismena.

ORCANES.

The coldness 'twixt Demophoon and Mathufius
Has reach'd the public notice; born to shine
In camps alone, Mathufius has not learnt
The soft address to rise in courts.

ADRASTUS.

'Tis true,
And bred with him, Timanthes has imbib'd

His

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His temper's warmth, which oft, by youth inflam'd,
Flies to extremes — Cherinthus, his young brother,
Is form'd of softer mould ; yet both possess
Demophoon's heart ; and born of different queens,
He in Timanthes seems to prize the gifts
Of manly fortitude, while in Cherinthus
He loves the milder virtues that revive
His queen Serena's memory.

O R C A N E S.

Cherinthus

Is now expected from the Phrygian land,
Sent by Demophoon on some embassy
Of high concern — but see the king approaches.

Enter DEMOPHOON attended.

D E M O P H O O N.

'Tis well — Mathufius' absence on the eve
Of this important day, when he should meet
My conquering son, the pupil of his arms,
Argues a stubbornness and disregard
A sovereign ill can brook : we own his deeds,
His years of service for the state ; — but tell
The all-presuming man, that merit, self
O'er-rated, cancels its reward — Adrastus,
Ought hears't thou of Cherinthus ?

A D R A S T U S.

No, my liege ;

But to the Thracian port, the favouring winds
Must bring his vessel, ere the close of eve.
Forgive a subject's freedom, but you seem
Oppress'd with secret care.

D E M O P H O O N.

The time, Adrastus,

Now calls for meditation, and how few

B 2

Are

TIMANTHES:

Are a king's hours of peace, whose every day
Teems with some counsel for the public weal.

ADRASTUS.

Yet this auspicious day my king must own
Sets not with common lustre, when your son,
The brave Timanthes, from the Scythian land,
Adds to his father's brow new wreaths of fame,
And to his people gives the palms of peace.
No, sacred fir, the hardy sons of Thrace
Did never celebrate with greater joy
A conquering chief's return.

DEMOPHOON.

Well pleas'd I hear

My faithful people's shouts ascend the sky;
And sympathize in those exulting sounds,
That to the much-lov'd name of my Timanthes,
Join every wish — but hark! the victor comes.

Enter TIMANTHES attended.

TIMANTHES.

Royal fir!

To whom Timanthes owns the double tie
Of son and subject; see him now return'd
From Scythia's kingdom with success and conquest
To grace a father's throne —

DEMOPHOON.

Timanthes, rise:

The king and father give thee double welcome,
And treble praise to Mars the armipotent,
That gives Demophoon in his darling son
His kingdom's best defender.

TIMANTHES.

Thanks to heaven,

Whose smiles have grac'd my unexperienc'd arms!

I may,

A TRAGEDY.

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I may, without a blush, confess my deeds :
 Yes, we have conquer'd ; never view'd the fun
 A more extensive slaughter : 'midst the tumult
 Of fear and rage, were blended undistinguish'd
 The brave, the base, the victor and the vanquish'd.
 The day at length was ours ; if you demand
 A proof of this, behold yon' captive bands,
 Behold yon' shatter'd arms and streaming ensigns.

DEMOPHOON.

'Tis not alone o'er the stern Scythian foe
 Thou spread'st thy trophies ; by subduing him,
 Thou triumph'st in Demophoon's breast — mean-time
 In this embrace receive my pledge of love :
 Thy father welcomes thee — proceed, my son,
 Urge on thy course to honour's furthest goal,
 Till verging on the extreme of age, Demophoon
 Beholds thy fame eclipse his own — but toils
 Demand refreshment, and the weary'd arm
 Of valour gains new vigour from repose.
 But I have that requires thy private ear ;
 Let all, except Timanthes, leave the presence.

[Exeunt attendants.]

Manent DEMOPHOON and TIMANTHES.

DEMOPHOON.

Come near, my son — thou little think'st how much
 Thy happiness employs my careful breast.
 While in the distant fields of fame Timanthes
 Encounter'd dangers for his father's honour,
 Demophoon's thoughts were all employ'd at home,
 To bless his glad return with halcyon days.

TIMANTHES.

Have I not felt your goodness? since the time
 Of early childhood to the ripening age

Of

Of manly life, a father has prevented
My every wish.—

DEMOPHOON.

Thou know'st Argea dy'd
Ere twice six moons had taught thy tongue to lisp
A mother's name — two years elaps'd, once more
I try'd the nuptial band : Cherinthus crown'd
This second union — but his birth, alas !
Was fatal to Serena ; and with her,
In me the husband dy'd ; and now the father
Engrosses all my soul.

T I M A N T H E S.

Still may Timanthes
With filial duty sooth your days in peace,
And oft as war shall call your banners forth
Return with conquest home.

DEMOPHOON.

Thou canst not tell
How dear I hold thee — to the toil of arms
Love gives its soft relief, and beauty best
Smooths the rough front of war : tho' now my years
Roll forward, and the summer of my life
Yields to declining autumn, well I know
What youth has been, and what befits the age
When jocund spring leads up the laughing hours.

T I M A N T H E S.

Alas ! my lord, let not your goodness task
Timanthes' gratitude, I ask no more
To crown my labours than Demophoon's smiles.
What bliss is wanting to that chief, whose arms
Defend his sovereign's throne and guard his people ?

DEMOPHOON.

Yes, my lov'd son, Cephisa's virgin charms,
Cephisa, daughter to the Phrygian king,
Shall be thy valour's great reward.

A TRAGEDY.

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TIMANTHES.

Cephisa!

DEMOPHOON.

What mean'st thou? Wherefore hangs this sudden gloom—
O'er thy chang'd features? Can Cephisa's beauties,
Whom fighting kings — nay more —

TIMANTHES.

Yet hear me, fir,
Be not displeas'd with your Timanthes — Heav'n's
My witness, gladly would I yield my life,
If such a sacrifice could aught avail
To insure Demophoon's peace — but I confess
Repugnance here. —

DEMOPHOON.

Timanthes! —

TIMANTHES.

Tho' I own,
(What fame has loudly spoken) every virtue
That decks the royal virgin, yet if aught
My deeds have merited —

DEMOPHOON.

Where can we find
Another partner for Timanthes' bed,
Unless a subject born? — Think not, my son,
The shades of our great ancestors shall blush
To see their line disgrac'd — from them we hold
The statute, that condemns to death the subject
Who weds with royal blood; and whilst I live
I'm guardian of the laws, and will enforce them
Even with severest rigour.

TIMANTHES.

Sacred fir —

Enter

Enter ORCANES.

ORCANES.

The Phrygian ships, my lord, are now descry'd
Full steering to the port, their spreading sails
Swell in the winds that waft them to the shore.

DEMOPHOON.

'Tis well — go thou, my son, to meet thy brother,
And bid the princess welcome to the land :
Myself would with thee, but the priests demand
My presence at the temple, to consult
To-morrow's mournful rites.

TIMANTHES.

[aside.] Doubts rise on doubts !

This dreadful sacrifice — yet stay, my father —

DEMOPHOON.

What would'st thou ? — speak —

TIMANTHES.

Alas ! I know not what —

Fain would I utter — but —

DEMOPHOON.

No more, I cannot

Prolong the precious time in vain debate :

The terms are settled, prince — then summon all

Thy virtue to respect a parent's will,

And dress thy looks in smiles to meet Cephisa.

[Exeunt Demophoon and Orcanes.]

TIMANTHES *alone.*

Ha ! dress my looks in smiles to meet Cephisa !

What have I heard ! — O ! where's Ismena now,

That once could sooth my cares ! whose beauty best

Smooth'd the rough task of war — Methinks even now

She chides the lingering hours — then let me fly,

Steal

Steal unperceiv'd upon the beauteous mourner,
And with Timanthes' love relieve her sorrows!

[Exit.

SCENE, *A Garden.*

Enter MATHUSIUS *and* ISMENA.

ISMENA.

Yet hear me, sir, nor chide your lov'd Ismena,
If she presume, with unexperienc'd counsel,
To guide a father's thoughts — Alas! I fear
The fond impatience of paternal tenderness
But makes that evil sure, which fortune else
May otherwise dispose.—Has not Demophoon
Dispatch'd some delegates to Delphos' shrine,
Once more to seek a period to the scourge
That hangs each year on our devoted Thrace?

MATHUSIUS.

From thence no comfort springs—This very morn
Arriv'd, they from the sacred tripods brought
Their doubtful answer, that the land must groan
Beneath the wrath of heaven, till to himself
Th' offender shall be known, who, guiltless now,
Usurps a prince's right.

ISMENA.

Mysterious all!

MATHUSIUS.

Mean-time destruction with remorseless fury
Hangs o'er my child, the darling of my age!
And shall I then consent —

ISMENA.

Yet recollect
Your wonted fortitude—why should you hope
That, 'midst the weeping maids of Thrace, Ismena

C

Should

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TIMANTHES:

Should stand exempted from the fatal urn?

You plead the king perhaps —

MATHUSIUS.

And just the plea:

Am I, because a subject, less a father?

Apollo wills some virgin, nobly born,

Should stain his altar every year with blood.

Let him recall his daughter, kept at distance

With artful policy — let him expose

Her name in yonder urn, and let him prove

What pangs distract a wretched parent's breast

When his heart trembles, as the priest draws near

The sacred vase, while with a solemn mien

His lips prepare to speak the victim's name.

ISMENA.

Alas! my lord, cast round your eyes, behold

The Thracian court, and mark her proudest nobles

Whose hearts have shudder'd on this awful day

For a child's threaten'd life — 'tis true Arsene,

The first-born off-spring of his queen Argea,

Resides at distance from Demophoon's palace:

But yet reflect, that, singly to refuse

Ismena's name, will but incense the king:

Let not my danger urge you to expose

Your age to further woe — too much already

He views you with an unpropitious eye.

I dread to think, if now too far provok'd,

What mischief may ensue!

MATHUSIUS.

In vain thou tell'st me

Of wrath or hatred in his breast, while reason

Asserts my cause, and heaven inspires my thoughts.

Was it for this I taught his arms to conquer,

And bred his son to greatness? Yes, by me

The

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The Scythian foe is vanquish'd; and by me
This eve Timanthes comes in triumph home.

I S M E N A.

Timanthes, O! my heart! [*aside.*] What says my father,
Is then the prince return'd?

M A T H U S I U S.

He is, Ismena,
And comes in happy hour: his generous soul
Disdains not to remember that Mathusius
Taught his young sword to reap in glory's field:
To him I will appeal — he will, with pity,
Behold a parent's sufferings.

I S M E N A.

Yet, my father,
Should the brave prince, with sympathizing heart,
Plead vainly with Demophoon, O! forbear
To urge the contest further: hope, the genius
That still has watch'd your years of danger past,
Will guard your age from anguish.

M A T H U S I U S.

Cease, Ismena,
To oppose, with fruitless words, my fix'd resolve:
No, if I still must be condemn'd to feel
This anguish of the soul, yon haughty monarch
Shall share with me those fears a father knows,
Nor stand excluded from Mathusius' pangs!

[*Exit.*]

I S M E N A *alone.*

The tempest thickens round! my little bark
That, till this hour has stemm'd life's boisterous wave,
At length, I fear, must sink — Timanthes comes,
He comes with conquest crown'd, but where are now
Ismena's smiles to meet him! Is it thus,

With tears ill-omen'd, with foreboding sighs,
I give him welcome here !

Enter TIMANTHES.

My life ! my lord !

Com'st thou again, preserv'd from danger's field,
To these fond arms !

TIMANTHES.

Yes, 'midst the sterner deeds
Which glory claim'd, thy image, present still,
Sooth'd every toil—And art thou then the same
As when I left thee at the call of honour ?

ISMENA.

Canst thou then doubt me ! If thy heart, Timanthes,
In the rough shock of war, and clang of arms,
Forgot not softer hours of peace and love,
Think'st thou, Ismena, 'midst these shades, that oft
Have witness'd to our mutual vows, would ever
Cast off remembrance that she once was happy ?

TIMANTHES.

Forgive the fondness of o'erflowing love
That wishes still to hear those gentle lips
Breathe their soft vows—How fares my boy Olinthus ?
The precious fruit of our connubial joys,
That heaven bestowed while, distant with thy father,
Four springs renewing since the Thracian grove,
Timanthes march'd against his country's foes ?

ISMENA.

Some God, that watches o'er this pledge of love,
Sure crowns his tender age with growing beauty,
Or the fond mother with imagin'd grace
Has deck'd his infancy ; his looks already
Assume thy manly sternness ; when he smiles,

He's

He's all thyself; and oft as I can steal
 A wish'd-for look, I gaze with rapture on him,
 And think I view Timanthes, till deceiv'd
 With the dear thought, I strain him to my breast,
 And in the son embrace the absent father.

TIMANTHES.

What place contains our infant hope! O! lead,
 Lead me, Ismena, where these longing eyes
 May in his features read a father's likeness,
 Or see them blooming with his mother's charms.

ISMENA.

Alas! my lord, awhile suppress these warm
 Paternal feelings — some few miles remote,
 Sequester'd from the city, on the edge
 Of the rude forest, Arcas and Ianthe,
 A rustic pair, unconscious of their charge,
 Rear his young life — Amidst the observing eyes
 That watch a prince's deeds, you must beware,
 And but with caution see him — Heaven allows
 To us with scanty hand the parent's joys,
 In the soft moments of o'erflowing nature,
 To clasp him in our fond endearing arms,
 And bless the prattler with the tongue of transport.

TIMANTHES.

By heav'n it shall not be — I'll burst at once
 From dark dissimulation's veil — 'tis now
 The crisis of our fate!

ISMENA.

It is indeed:

To-morrow's sun lights up the solemn day
 Of annual sacrifice: Ismena's name
 Must stand enroll'd amongst th' elected train
 That wait the dreadful chance.

TIMANTHES:

TIMANTHES.

Ismena's name!

ISMENA.

'Tis so decreed, — yet think not that I fear
 To die for Thrace — no, for her country's sake,
 Ismena gladly would embrace her doom.
 But Phœbus' words demand a virgin's blood;
 Shall I, a wife and mother, dare approach
 His sacred altar, an unhallow'd victim?
 Thus, if I speak or not, I still am guilty,
 My silence heaven offends, my speech the king.

TIMANTHES.

The king must know the secret of our nuptials:
 All, all demands is now — for, O Ismena,
 This very hour perhaps Cherinthus brings
 A rival to thy love — Cephisa comes;
 But now Demophoon urg'd me to receive
 The Phrygian princess — but, be witness heaven!
 Not all the cruel policy of courts,
 Not the stern mandates of a king and father,
 Shall e'er dissolve those tender ties which love
 Has form'd, and virtue sanctifies.

ISMENA.

Alas!

What can it all avail! our union publish'd,
 Thou know'st the sentence of the law impends
 On my devoted head.

TIMANTHES.

A monarch made,
 A monarch can revoke the stern decree:
 Demophoon, tho' severe, is still a parent,

His

His kind indulgence shall avert the stroke
That threatens Iſmena.

I S M E N A.

Rather let it come :

Too long, Timanthes, haſt thou ſacrific'd
Thy glory to Iſmena — O ! reflect
How ill the name of Thracia's heir agrees
With ſecret nuptials and clandestine love.
Let me embrace my fate — I die with joy,
Since I, in death, can call Timanthes mine !

T I M A N T H E S.

O ! fortune, wherefore did thy lavish hand
Give my Iſmena every charm, yet place
Her virtues in the vale of private life ?
But be it ſo — it reſts on me to amend
The partial error — Thrace, ſome future day,
With joy ſhall view her partner of my throne.
Farewell, my love, and let this fix'd aſſurance
Dwell in thy mind, and calm thy troubled thoughts :
Timanthes will be ever watchful o'er thee,
And hold thy peace far dearer than his own.

[*Exeunt ſeverally.*]

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

A C T II.

SCENE, *A sea-port.**Enter CHERINTHUS, CEPHISA, and Attendants.*

CEPHISA.

WHAT means this sadness, prince? With silent gaze
 You look and sigh, and if with friendly speech
 I urge your converse, when you seem prepar'd
 To tell me much, your faltering tongue is mute.
 Where is your wonted cheerfulness? the grace
 That season'd your discourse? Are you in Thrace
 The same Cherinthus that I knew in Phrygia?
 Or is it thus, with melancholy looks,
 You Thracians to her lord conduct a bride?

CHERINTHUS.

If my afflictions bear a sad presage,
 On me, fair princess, every evil fall:
 My stars can little add to griefs like mine,
 Nor breathes a wretch so hopeless as Cherinthus.

CEPHISA.

And claims Cephisa then so little share
 In your esteem! The time has been —

CHERINTHUS.

Forgive

This cold reserve — and yet believe me, fair-one,
 There is a something here commands my silence.

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CEPHISA.

'Tis true, I am a woman, and your secret
Were ill confided to our sex's weakness.
I urge no further — lead me to the palace.

CHERINTHUS.

Yet hear — those eyes like light'ning pierce my soul,
And all my firm resolves are lost before them.
O! turn, Cephisa, and with gentler looks
Unbend those brows; while trembling I confess,
'Tis thou hast robb'd me of my peace—I gaze
With rapture on thy matchless charms; I own
My love is fruitless all, that these fond wishes
Would grasp they know not what: I know that death
Alone can end my pains.

CEPHISA.

What means Cherinthus!

CHERINTHUS.

I knew too well I should offend — And yet
The faults of love —

CEPHISA.

Forbear — I'll hear no more —

Is this the brother of Timanthes? This
The prince deputed by the Thracian king?
And is it thus Cherinthus thinks to guard
That faith a brother and a father claim?

CHERINTHUS.

I own my crime — I know that every tie
Of son and brother should forbid my passion.
Why was I only singled by Demophoon,
To bring thee to Timanthes? Could I view
Thy charms, and yet resist? — I saw and lov'd.
Each day beheld me near thee, while the name
Of kinsman gave a license to my tongue:

D

Nor

Nor did this name deceive the world alone,
 I was deceiv'd myself — that love, which made
 Me sigh for ever for Cephisa's presence,
 Appear'd but duty, and a thousand-times
 I thought to paint the affections of a brother,
 While my too eager speech betray'd my own.

CEPHISA.

[*aside.*] Alas ! 'twas not in vain — Cephisa too
 Perceiv'd a something she would fain disown.

CHERINTHUS.

And yet sometimes I felt a flattering hope :
 Methought I oft observ'd a tender sigh
 Steal from thy breast, view'd in thy eyes a softness
 That seem'd much more than friendship —

CEPHISA.

Hold, Cherinthus,
 Thou dost begin to abuse my easy nature.
 It ill befits the daughter of Nicanor,
 Affianc'd to Timanthes, heir of Thrace,
 To hear with calmness these injurious vows,
 At once destructive to her peace and fame.

CHERINTHUS.

Forgive me, princess, and I will obey ;
 Thou shalt no more reproach my daring love,
 Injurious to thy glory — Spite of all
 The pangs that rend my heart, conviction's force
 Dwells in thy words, and I'll no more offend.
 No, I will strive to wear the face of joy,
 And kindly bless my happier brother's fate.

Enter TIMANTHES.

Welcome, Timanthes, to thy native land,
 Fame, the loud harbinger of thy approach,

Has

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Has rous'd each Thracian son to hail thy presence,
And I but join the common voice.

TIMANTHES.

Receive

In this embrace, my thanks — but say, Cherinthus,
Is this the royal fair one who forsakes
Her country's gentle seat to visit Thrace,
And with her beauties gild our rougher clime?

CHERINTHUS.

It is — behold, while others with applause
Congratulate thy fortune, what a treasure
Thy brother brings, to give thee every blessing
That love and beauty can bestow. —

TIMANTHES.

Her looks

Bespeak perfection — Let Timanthes then,
Imperial virgin, greet thy safe arrival
From Phrygia's happy shore — Vouchsafe awhile,
Cherinthus, to retire apart — my thoughts
Revolve some secret of import, that claims
The princess' ear alone.

CHERINTHUS.

I shall obey.

What can this mean? But wherefore ask, or what
Avails their converse to the lost Cherinthus?

[walks aside.]

TIMANTHES.

How shall Timanthes, beauteous princess, dress
His thoughts in apt expression? I should now
Pour forth the raptures of a heart, decreed
To excellence like yours — but O! there is
Fatality in man, and oft when Heaven
Holds out an unexpected blessing to us,
Some mystery forbids —

D 2

C E-

TIMANTHES:

CEPHISA.

What would the prince?

Let not Timanthes seek the low disguise
Of art, the refuge of ignoble minds,
But boldly, as he meets his foes in battle,
Speak out his secret soul.

TIMANTHES.

The statesman oft

Joins with the specious plea of public good
Two hearts averse: our parents have decreed
An union to thyself perhaps ungrateful.
Thy virtues might demand the noblest heart;
But fate forbids us ever to unite:
There is a bar which nothing can surmount:
My father knows it not, nor must I speak it;
Refuse, refuse me then, enlarge my faults,
And thus preserve thy fame, my peace and life!

CEPHISA.

'Tis well — my lord —

TIMANTHES.

I see the conscious pride

Of greatness rising on thy cheek — my presence
But adds to your displeasure — my Cherinthus,
The care be thine, with every mark of honour,
Such as may suit her station and desert,
Hence to conduct the princess to the palace.

[Exit,

CEPHISA.

What have I heard! Is this the boasted youth
Whom fame extols for gallantry and arms!
And is it thus he treats a virgin, sprung
From Phrygia's scepter'd kings! — neglected! Heaven!
And shall I tamely bear this outrage?

CHE-

A TRAGEDY.

21

CHERINTHUS.

coming forward.]

Princess,

What indignation rises in your breast?

Your looks are chang'd — has then my brother —

CEPHISA.

Yes,

I see your mutual purpose to betray me:

Was it for this I left my native land,

Left the fond arms of an indulgent father,

To meet with insult on this foreign shore!

To bear unmov'd the injury that waits

Cherinthus' passion, and his brother's scorn?

But if Demophoon —

Enter ADRASTUS.

ADRASTUS.

To the fair Cephisa,

Our sovereign wishes health; the Thracian palace,

Adorn'd with every pomp, expects your presence;

Demophoon now, as annual rites require,

Sequester'd with the priests till morning dawn,

Invokes the powers divine; mean while he sends

By me to pay the tribute of respect

Your rank and sex demand, to lead you now

Where suppliant crowds attend with duteous zeal,

To pay their homage to their future queen.

CEPHISA.

I thank thee, lord — Cephisa hopes no less

From great Demophoon and her father's friend.

Cherinthus, let us hence — but still remember

Thy plighted word; for know, whatever chance

Subjects Cephisa to unlook'd for insult,

Yet nothing from her mind can e'er erase,

Such thoughts as fit the daughter of a king.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE *changes to the garden.*ISMENA *alone.*

What would my fate! — But now Mathufius bade me
 Prepare for flight — and whither must I fly?
 What region will receive forlorn Ismena
 To end her wretched life! — O! my Olinthus,
 Must I forsake thy innocence, forsake
 My much-lov'd lord without one parting look!
 I sicken at the thought —

Enter TIMANTHES.

TIMANTHES.

What new distress
 Hangs o'er my love! tho' distant from thy sight
 My sympathizing spirit mourn'd with thee,
 And whisper'd that thy sorrow claim'd my aid.

ISMENA.

O! no — thy cares are vain — leave, leave me then
 Alone to perish — the big tempest swells
 That soon must hide me from thy sight for ever.

TIMANTHES.

What means Ismena!

ISMENA.

I must quit Timanthes,
 Mathufius warns me hence — but now he left me,
 Some dreadful purpose labouring in his breast:
 Yet 'ere we part, to thy paternal care
 I here commend my child; for me embrace him,
 Give him this kiss, and when his ripening age
 Can feel compassion, tell him all my story.

TIMANTHES.

It must not be — Timanthes with the wings
 Of love shall fly, o'ertake thy fleeting peace
 And bring her back to her forsaken home.

Soon

Soon as the morning dawns I'll seek the king,
With filial reverence clasp his honour'd knees :
Doubt not, my love, but all shall yet be well !

Enter MATHUSIUS.

MATHUSIUS.

My daughter, let us haste—art thou Timanthes,
Son of Demophoon ? Let me gaze awhile ;
Those features once bespoke thee kind and brave,
Till now I ever held thee such—but say,
Is not injustice stamp'd upon thy nature,
And all thy father in thy heart—O ! no,
Thou'rt still the same—yes, I had fought thee, prince,
Thy old Mathusius, once rever'd, in thee
Had vested every hope — but now 'tis past —

ISMENA.

Alas ! my father, must Ismena then
For ever load a parent's breast with anguish ?
Am I th' unhappy cause —

MATHUSIUS.

— Now hear, Timanthes,
And if thou ever held'st Mathusius dear,
Thy generous breast will feel a father's pangs,
A father, whom the rage of tyrant power
Pursues to ruin — O ! my child, my child !

TIMANTHES.

Mathusius, speak — Has then Ismena's name
Been drawn to-morrow's victim ?

MATHUSIUS.

No—Demophoon
Has doom'd her life a guiltless sacrifice
Without the sentence of the fatal urn.

TIMANTHES.

Condemn'd to die, the lots of death undrawn,
All-powerful Gods ! —

ISMENA.

TIMANTHES:

ISMENA.

O fir! weep not for me,
 I merit not the tears that stain those cheeks,
 Too deep they enter here — no, let me bear
 Affliction's pressure, till the fainting sense
 Sink with its anguish, so I may, retir'd
 From mortal eyes, indulge my griefs alone,
 Nor bend that hoary head to earth with sorrow.

TIMANTHES.

It cannot be — Mathusius, thou'rt deceiv'd —
 How couldst thou kindle thus the king's resentment
 Against her helpless life?

MATHUSIUS.

Because I fought
 To exclude Ismena from the lots of fate,
 Because I durst produce his own example:
 But now I met him near the temple's porch,
 Encompass'd by the priests; with all the warmth
 Of a fond father trembling for his child,
 I urg'd, entreated — but in vain — the king
 Beheld me with an haughty eye; enrag'd
 My tongue reproach'd the monarch's partial voice
 That to his subjects, prodigal of death,
 Gave to the bloody knife our Thracian virgins,
 While kept at distance from the suffering land,
 His own Arsene shunn'd the fatal stroke.

ISMENA.

I tremble for th' event — not for myself,
 But thee, Ismena fears — Ah! wherefore, fir,
 Would you for me rashly incense a power
 Which sovereigns, ever jealous, still defend?
 What answer made the king?

MATHUSIUS.

His indignation
 Repress'd within himself, found little vent

In

In words—at length—“ presumptuous man (he cry'd)
 “ Soon shalt thou feel that still Demophoon knows
 “ How to avenge affronted majesty.”

Then turning from me swift, the temple gates
 Receiv'd and shut him from my sight—since when
 I've heard that secret orders have been given
 To seize Ismena.

TIMANTHES.

Ha!—direct me Heaven,

What now befits Timanthes— [Aside.

ISMENA.

Yes, it dawns!

The work of fate now opens to my view,
 And all must be reveal'd—be firm, my soul,
 And nobly meet the trial. [Aside.

TIMANTHES.

Is it possible!

In this extreme what course remains?

MATHUSIUS.

Beside

The clefted rock, mann'd with a chosen few
 And trusty servants, rides a bark prepar'd
 With secret care, that will convey us hence,
 To some far distant hospitable clime,
 Where 'tis not criminal to be a father.

TIMANTHES.

It must not be—O fir!—

MATHUSIUS.

What means Timanthes?

TIMANTHES.

Ismena must not quit the Thracian shore—

MATHUSIUS.

Not quit the Thracian shore!— now by yon' powers
 That sit in judgment o'er a father's wrongs,

E

No

No human breath shall stay us—haste, my daughter,
Prepare this instant to depart—

TIMANTHES,

Distraction!

And shall I then permit—Mathusius, hear,
Urge not my temper further—well thou know'st
My soul has ever held thee as her best,
Her earliest guide—if I oppose thee now—

MATHUSIUS.

Is this thy love? Would'st thou forbid a father
To save his only child from cruel death?

TIMANTHES.

O no!—thou canst not tell how dear I prize
Her safety here—come danger in her worst,
Her ugliest form, this breast shall meet the dart
That threatens Ismena.

MATHUSIUS.

We but waste the time
That, with destruction wing'd, unheeded flies:
Away, my daughter—

TIMANTHES.

Not th' united force
Of earth shall bear her hence—

MATHUSIUS.

Nay then, the sword
Shall vindicate the rights a father claims,

ISMENA.

Hold, fir, and hear Ismena—O! Mathusius,
Dost thou not see some secret labouring here
Too big for speech—thou claim'st a father's right,
And sacred is that claim, but yet beware,
Nor let the hasty sword, with thoughtless rage,
Invade a right more sacred than your own,
The prince—how shall I speak?

MA-

A TRAGEDY.

27

MATHUSIUS.

What new alarm
Runs thro' my soul!—Is't possible!

TIMANTHES.

My father,
For such thou art—think not thy breast can feel
Severer anguish for Ismeria's danger
Than what a husband feels —

MATHUSIUS.

Her husband!

TIMANTHES.

Yes,
She is, she is my wife — then judge, Mathusius,
If I could bear, without the sharpest pang,
To see her torn for ever from my sight.

MATHUSIUS.

Ah! prince, what hast thou done! thy cruel love
Has fill'd the measure of Mathusius' woes.
'Thou most unkind! Is this the recompense
Awaits my suffering age? — Unhappy girl!
To tie the fatal knot that ends in death!

ISMENA.

Here prostrate at your feet, permit me now
To own the fault excess of love inspir'd:
And yet you can forgive; for if I read
Those looks aright, resentment dwells not there:
Nor will I plead the virtues of the prince,
Tho' these, my lord, were oft your lip's fond theme,
While under covert of yon' arching shade,
I drank, with greedy ears, his grateful praise.

MATHUSIUS.

No more, my child — O! I forgive thee all —
But dangers thicken round, these nuptials known,

T I M A N T H E S :

The rigid law shall seal thee for destruction,
And mock a father's sorrows.

T I M A N T H E S.

No, Mathusius,
By every future hour of hop'd-for peace,
My life shall be her safe-guard.

*Enter Officer and Guard.**Officer.*

Pardon, sir,
If, with reluctance, I obey the charge
My sovereign gives — Guards, bear Ismena hence.

M A T H U S I U S.

What means this violence ?

I S M E N A.

The lot is cast !

Come every spirit that has fir'd my sex,
Thro' the long records of succeeding time,
To dare beyond the softness of our kind,
Now steel my thoughts — my fortune claims it all !
So may'st thou own, my father, though one fond
Unguarded hour betray'd my yielding soul,
Yet shall the sufferings of this awful day,
The little span of life that fate allows,
Atone for every error.

T I M A N T H E S.

Death to hear !

Unhand her, slaves !

M A T H U S I U S.

Age has not yet unnerv'd
This arm so far —

Officer.

Officer.

Forbear—if either moves
To give her aid, this dagger drinks her blood —

TIMANTHES.

Inhuman villain! hold —

Officer.

The royal mandate
Shall justify my deeds — Away.)

ISMENA.

Yet stay,
A moment's pause — still, still, the woman here
Is struggling in my breast — my father — Oh —
I dare no further — [looking at Timanthes.

MATHUSIUS.

Speak —

ISMENA.

Think not, Mathusius,
Though black adversity now folds me round,
That aught of anguish for myself can shake
Thy daughter's mind — No! I could bear it all!
But when we view the pangs of those we love,
The firmest temper shrinks, and even the tear
Of weakness then is virtue — Gracious heaven!
Protect, defend — I would, but must not speak —
Ye powers! who read my thoughts, supply the prayer
I cannot utter, and whate'er her doom,
At least, in those she loves, preserve Ismena!

[Exit guarded.

TIMANTHES, MATHUSIUS.

TIMANTHES.

O! give me patience, Gods!

TIMANTHES.

MATHUSIUS.

Earth opens not,
Nor lightnings fly to punish such injustice!
And shall we say Jove watches o'er mankind!
Timanthes, speak—for we are now united
In bands of wretchedness.

TIMANTHES.

Go, good Mathusius,
And learn the place to which they bear Ismena,
For should I strive in vain to appease my father,
Yet love shall point the way—

MATHUSIUS.

No—every hope
Is now extinct, and black despair shuts up
The gloomy prospect.

TIMANTHES.

Can the soft in vain
Plead with a father for his life, his all!
O! 'tis a cause will call down every soft
Propitious power that feels for human sufferings,
To heal the anguish of a parent's breast,
To calm a lover's and a husband's pains,
To arrest the hand of fate, and save Ismena!

[*Exeunt severally.*]

END of the SECOND ACT.

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE, *A royal Apartment.**Enter DEMOPHOON and CEPHISA.*

DEMOPHOON.

RETURN to Phrygia, princess ! Canst thou ask
 Abruptly thus to bid adieu to Thrace,
 While now Timanthes with presaging hope
 Anticipates the hour, decreed to bless
 The prince and lover, when this solemn day
 Shall pass, whose rising light now faintly strikes
 The sacred laurels, where the temple's grove
 Receives the dawn ?

CEPHISA.

Believe me, my resolves
 Are such as suit my sex and rank ; the name
 Of virgin and of princess both require me
 To quit the Thracian palace — for Timanthes
 No longer urge —

DEMOPHOON.

I can forgive thy anger ;
 Nurs'd in the pleasures of the Phrygian court,
 A Thracian's manners may be harsh to thee :
 Wonder not then if so Timanthes seems,
 Inur'd to rugged arms ; be thine the glory
 To teach him first the flowery path that leads
 To the calm dwelling of domestic sweets :
 What cannot charms like thine ? — yes, fair Cephisa,
 Those eyes shall thaw the ice around his heart,
 And warm the youth to unexperienc'd love.

CE-

TIMANTHES:

CEPHISA.

My lord, it cannot be — as soon this morn
That spreads the veil of sorrow o'er the land,
Might raise each heart with gladness, as Cephisa
Find happiness in Thrace — at thy command,
And thine alone, the ships can quit the port,
To bear me back to my paternal land:
Give orders then to loose the bark, whose sails
Must waft me hence for ever.

DEMOPHOON.

Think not, princess,
Demophoon would detain thee while thy thoughts
Revisit Phrygia; yet permit me now
To say I hop'd far other from the daughter
Of him, whose wish'd alliance promis'd all
An anxious king and parent could demand.
But yet, whate'er thy wish, till the next sun,
Thou canst not hence; no vessel from the port
Presumes to rear the mast, or spread the sail,
Till this sad day declines.

CEPHISA.

Since now the law
Forbids to quit the realm, I must submit
To breathe the air of Thrace — yet I respect
The friend of great Nicanor — but remember
My father's honour and my own; nay more,
Demophoon's urges me to leave a court,
Where every moment's voluntary stay
Insults my sex's rights, and stains my glory.

[Exit.]

DEMOPHOON alone.

Ha! whence is this? sure something lurks beneath
That yet I know not — I remember now,
When first I nam'd the princess, that my son

Heard

Heard with reluctance—should he disobey—
A father's just resentment—but no more,
It cannot be—I am alarm'd too soon.

Enter TIMANTHES.

TIMANTHES.

Where is my king!

DEMOPHOON.

Timanthes, thou art come
In happy time—

TIMANTHES.

Dread sir, permit your son
To sue for grace and pardon—

DEMOPHOON.

Say, for whom
Dost thou intreat?

TIMANTHES.

For an unhappy victim;
One, whose misfortune is her only crime,
The daughter of Mathufius—

DEMOPHOON.

'Tis too late,
Her doom is seal'd—

TIMANTHES.

Grant to your suppliant son
Her guiltless life!—

DEMOPHOON.

And dar'st thou still presume
To name her? If thou valu'st aught my love,
Forego this vain request—

TIMANTHES.

Alas! my father,
I cannot now obey you—O! if ever
I have deserv'd a parent's tenderness,

If with a bosom seam'd with honest scars,
 I have return'd a conqueror to your arms,
 If e'er my triumphs in the glorious field,
 Have drawn the tear of pleasure from your eyes,
 Release, forgive Ismena — lost, unhappy,
 She has no friend but me to plead her cause!
 And shall she perish! — think you view her now
 In early bloom of life, who never knew
 The thoughts of guilt, stretch'd on the fatal altar
 In all the pangs of suffering—think you see
 The life-warm blood gush from her tender breast,
 Hear the last accents from her trembling lips,
 Behold her dying eyes — but thou art pale!
 Why look'st thou thus upon me! — O! my father!
 I see, I see the gracious signs of pity;
 Do not repent, my lord — indulge it still,
 For never will I quit these sacred feet
 Till thou hast given the word to spare Ismena.

DEMOPHOON.

Rise, prince — Almighty powers! what must I think
 That with such tenderness thou nam'st Ismena.
 Yet mark how far my fond indulgence yields;
 On one condition I recall her sentence:
 Ismena yet may live, but if the father,
 Impell'd by love, forgets his just resentment,
 Let not the son forget the sacred ties
 Of gratitude and duty —

TIMANTHES.

Never, never
 Timanthes shall forget them, every hour
 To come shall bless your goodness for this pardon,
 Which life itself were cheaply given to purchase.

DEMOPHOON.

No, my dear son, my future peace and thine
 Ask but one sacrifice, and all is well:

What

What hast thou done to offend the Phrygian princeſs?
 Learn to reſpect my choice in fair Cephifa —
 Have I not felt compaſſion for thy weakneſs?
 Do thou preſerve my honour — think, Timanthes,
 Nor let the breath of rumour taint my name;
 Then, let us ſeek Cephifa, there, my ſon,
 Inſtruct thy lips to deprecate the anger
 I fear thy ſcorn has juſtly rais'd — to-morrow
 We'll to the temple, thither ſhalt thou lead
 Thy beauteous bride, and at the altar there,
 At once before th' attesting Gods fulfill
 What juſtice claims from thee and from Demophoon,

TIMANTHES.

My lord, I cannot —

DEMOPHOON.

Prince, thou yet haſt heard
 The father only; force me not to employ.
 The king's authority.

TIMANTHES.

Sacred alike
 I hold the dictates of the king and father,
 But love diſdains compulſion —

DEMOPHOON.

In the heart
 Of ſubjects, love may rule with ſovereign ſway;
 But in a prince, on whom a nation's weal
 Depends, it ill beſeems to ſacrifice
 The good of thouſands to the ſelfiſh weakneſs
 That better fits a cottage than a throne.

TIMANTHES.

Hard ſtate of royalty! if on ſuch terms
 Timanthes muſt be king, take back, ye powers!
 The dignity ye gave — can Heaven decree,

TIMANTHES:

That public virtue never should reside
Where the soft passions dwell? Must he, whose cares
Incessant labour for the good of others,
Still want that happiness he gives to all?

DEMOPHOON.

And dar'st thou dress thy disobedience thus
In reason's garb, to oppose my sovereign will?
Hence every partial weakness — just resentment
Points out the way to reach thy stubborn heart:
This darling of thy soul, Ismena — she
Shall pay the forfeit — now I see full well
What caus'd thy coldness — she shall die. —

TIMANTHES.

O heaven!

DEMOPHOON.

Away!

TIMANTHES.

Yet hear me, sir, —

DEMOPHOON.

I've heard too much

This day Ismena dies —

TIMANTHES.

Forbid it heaven!

Now by yon skies —

DEMOPHOON.

Still dost thou linger here?

TIMANTHES.

I go—but should she fall—this desperate hand—

DEMOPHOON.

Gods! dost thou threaten!

TIMANTHES.

Force me not, my father,
To passion's wild extreme — would'st thou preserve

The

The peace of thy unhappy son, preserve
 His fame, his all — revoke Ismena's doom —
 He answers not — that look confirms her death —
 Farewell — but whither, whither shall I fly
 To shun myself? — Ismena's image still
 Hangs on my sight, and haunts my tortur'd soul!

[Exit.

DEMOPHOON *alone.*

Where, where, Demophoon, is the mighty power
 A monarch boasts, when all insult thee thus?
 'Tis time to assert my rights — Adrastus!

Enter ADRASTUS.

Haste,

Give orders that the victim be prepar'd
 This instant for the sacrifice. —

ADRASTUS.

Already,

Ismena, vested in the robes of death,
 Expects the fatal hour. — I heard the priests
 Exhort her with becoming fortitude
 To yield her life a sacrifice for Thrace,
 While with a down-cast look the virgin stood
 In all the majesty of silent woe;
 And now they wait thy last command alone
 To bear her to the temple.

DEMOPHOON.

Her misfortune

Excites my pity; but her father's bold
 Rebellious insults on my crown and fame,
 My own repose, the glory of my realm,
 Demand her death — the weal of Thrace requires
 Timanthes' marriage with the Phrygian prince.
 But this Timanthes never will complete
 While she survives — this obstacle remov'd,

The

The flame of stubborn love shall soon decay,
And the rash youth, who now condemns my power,
Shall yield obedience to a parent's will.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *An open part of the city.*

Enter TIMANTHES and MATHUSIUS.

MATHUSIUS.

And canst thou then partake Mathusius' fortune,
A willing exile from thy father's kingdom?
Think, think, my son, when thou shalt wander hence,
An obscure fugitive, will then Ismena
With chaste endearments, from thy mind erase
Remembrance of the prince! Will not the phantom
Of royalty still haunt thy lonely hours?
Wilt thou not then regret paternal wealth
Abandon'd, and a scepter lost?

TIMANTHES.

No more —

My wife and son are dearer far than all:
Each other good has no intrinsic worth;
Opinion makes it great; the tender feelings
Of father, husband, are not bred by custom,
Or early thoughts instill'd from infancy:
The seeds are in ourselves, are with us born,
Grow with our life, and but with life expire.

MATHUSIUS.

Yet how to set her free? Is she not now
Encompass'd by Demophoon's guards?

TIMANTHES.

The care

Be mine to elude their utmost vigilance:
Assisted by some chosen friends, I'll bear
Ismena safe from danger.

M A -

MATHUSIUS.

Mighty powers !

Direct our flight — each moment that detains us
 I'm on the rack of doubt — O ! prince, remember
 To thee alone I trust my all, my last
 Remains of ebbing life.

TIMANTHES.

Haste then, Mathusius,

Ascend thy bark, and near yon rocks, that rise
 Right of the port, expect my coming, thither
 With all the speed of love I'll bear Ismena !

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE, *a view of an arch leading from the city, through which the procession for the sacrifice appears ; first the guards, who range themselves on each side the stage ; then a train of priests and virgins : Ismena, in white vestments, supported by two virgins, advances towards the front of the stage, while the following words are sung ; the Music composed by Mr. Arnold.*

CHORUS.

*Hail God of light ! whose chearing ray
 Dispels the gloom, reveals the day,
 And glads the universe with all-creating sway !*

SONG, by a PRIEST.

*To him the pow'r, whose awful will
 Trembling mortals must fulfill,
 To him the dreadful altar rear,
 And swell the notes till Phœbus hear !*

CHORUS.

Phœbus hear !

SONG,

TIMANTHES:

SONG, by a VIRGIN.

To Ism.] *Sad victim! learn the stroke to brave
That renders Heav'n the life it gave,
And sheds thy blood a land to save!*

CHORUS.

Hear and save!

ISMENA.

Yet, yet, Ismena, drain the bitter dregs
Of sorrow's cup — but some few painful moments
And all may then be well! — each step I tread
Leads me still nearer to the fated land
Where I shall rest in peace — but, O! support
My fainting sense — 'tis he! whose adverse power
Directs him hither, in this hour of terror,
To shake my firm resolves!

Enter TIMANTHES.

TIMANTHES.

Eyes! can it be!

Ismena, speak — what means this dreadful pomp!

ISMENA.

At length 'tis past, and ruthless death demands
Its victim — yes, Timanthes, we must part,
Demophoon has decreed my fate — even now
These ministers of heaven receiv'd the mandate.
My soul seem'd more than half releas'd, but thou
Hast call'd her back to life — this meeting wakes
A thousand tender thoughts —

TIMANTHES.

Cease, cease, Ismena,
It wakes distraction — shall I thus behold thee
Torn from my hopes — no first —

ISMENA.

A TRAGEDY.

41

I S M E N A.

Alas! what means

Timanthes —

T I M A N T H E S.

Never, whilst I live, this sword

That oft has mow'd my way thro' sanguine fields,
Shall sleep inglorious — *[lays his hand on his sword.]*

I S M E N A.

Ah! what wild despair

Unmans thy better sense — thou wilt but rush
On certain ruin, nor preserve my life.

T I M A N T H E S.

It shall be so — farewell! *[going.]*

I S M E N A.

Some dreadful purpose

Hangs on thy brow — yet hear me —

T I M A N T H E S.

Fate cuts short

Each precious moment — still I can command
A few but trusty friends, whose blood will flow
For their Timanthes — go then — seek the temple,
I'll save thee yet, or die!

I S M E N A.

Forbid it, heaven!

Be calm again —

T I M A N T H E S.

Be calm! — Impossible!

Is there a power on earth — let ruin come,
If midst the wreck one treasure still is mine! *[Exit.]*

Manent ISMENA, Priests, Virgins, and Guards.

I S M E N A.

Forbear — he heeds me not — Eternal powers!
Preserve him still — for me, my mind has fix'd

G

Its

Its last resolve — 'tis death, and death alone
 Shall quickly close the scene, and ere the priest
 Strike in my breast the consecrated steel,
 This dagger shall prevent the unhallow'd offering!
 So shall I fall a spotless wife, nor stain
 The sacred altar with forbidden blood!
 Yet hear me, Phœbus, still defend Timanthes,
 And guard him 'midst this whirlwind of the soul!

Enter CEPHISA, and Attendant.

CEPHISA.

Look, look, Clemene, view a sight to move
 The breast that never felt the touch of sorrow:
 Behold yon' maid, this day decreed to death,
 Yet, midst this awful pomp, see with what grace
 She moves, while fortitude and beauty join'd,
 Proclaim her more than woman — but observe,
 She sees us and approaches.

ISMENA.

Pardon, princess,
 But if I err not I behold Cephisa.

CEPHISA.

I am indeed Cephisa.

ISMENA.

Fame that speaks
 Thy virtues, tells me, that affliction never
 Will pass unpity'd by thy tender breast.

CEPHISA.

My sympathizing heart! — Unhappy maid!
 What would'st thou? speak.

ISMENA.

The fortune of Ismena
 Who has not known? my life will soon have run
 Its race of grief, this pomp proclaims me near

The

The wish'd-for goal, where the freed soul shall leave
 Her cumberous chains — I go prepar'd to die,
 Nor deprecate my fate — not for myself
 I plead, but for the poor distress'd Timānthes!
 To guard my life he courts his own destruction:
 If e'er th' intreaties of the dying move,
 Still let him find in you a kind protectress,
 Prevent his rage, or O! procure his pardon
 For all the frantic deeds of wild despair.

CEPHISA.

Ill-fated virgin! canst thou, with the shade
 Of cruel death already compass'd round,
 Forgetful of thyself, in generous care,
 Dwell on another's safety.

ISMENA.

Search not, princefs,
 Too deep my bosom's woe — but if thy goodness
 Shall mediate with the king to avert those evils
 Whose only fear now weighs me down to earth,
 The blessings of a wretch, whose latest breath
 By thee shall leave its care-worn breast in peace,
 Attend thy gentle steps!

CEPHISA.

Doubt not, Ismena,
 But every good Cephisa can obtain,
 Shall sooth thy parting hour — I'll seek Cherinthus,
 He, with a brother's warmest tenderest zeal,
 Shall calm the ungovern'd fury of Timanthes,
 While I, on his behalf, intreat the king.

ISMENA.

Then all is well — and now I've not a thought
 That here detains my flight — farewell! for ever —

And every happiness to me deny'd,
Be doubled on thy head — lead to the temple.

[Exeunt Cephisa and Attendant.]

RECITATIVE by a PRIEST.

*Now slowly lead the solemn train
To reach the grove and hallow'd fane!*

*Here Ismena falls again into the order of procession, while
the priests and virgins sing the following Chorus, as they
go out:*

CHORUS.

*Phœbus, to thee our choral hymn we raise,
Each year the land this sad oblation pays;
O! save at length — descend with healing grace,
And from thy scourge relieve unhappy Thrace!*

[Exeunt.]

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT

A C T IV.

SCENE, *The palace.*CHERINTHUS, CEPHISA, *meeting.*

CHERINTHUS.

I'VE fought, but cannot find him, yet I fear
 The worst from his ungovern'd warmth — but say,
 Cephisa, hast thou pleaded with the king?
 Could he refuse thy suit?

CEPHISA.

Demophoon, fix'd

In his resentment, with averted ear
 Rejects the voice of pity — Hark! what noise! —

CHERINTHUS.

A second louder yet — Ha! or I dream,
 It thickens from the temple's hallow'd grove;
 Adrastus comes disorder'd from the fane:
 Gods! what presaging horror fills my soul!

Enter ADRASTUS.

ADRASTUS.

Where, where's the king?

CHERINTHUS.

What means Adrastus! whence
 Those looks of fear!

ADRASTUS.

The rites were now prepar'd,
 And nought was wanting but Demophoon's presence,
 When, with a desperate band, the prince Timanthes
Broke

Broke thro' the guards that watch'd the portal, rush'd
 With daring footsteps thro' the sacred dome,
 Drove from the altar's foot the affrighted priests,
 And seiz'd the victim — then while fell distraction
 Storm'd with unlicens'd rage, I left the temple,
 And flew to bear the tidings to the king,
 Who best may quell this tumult.

[Exit.

CEPHISA.

Wherefore stands
 Cherinthus thus, when now his brother's life
 Hangs on the brink of fate?

CHERINTHUS.

Alas! Cephisa,
 I tremble at the thought — what shall I do?
 Instruct me, heaven, I'll to yon scene of terror,
 And prove what yet remains to save Timanthes!

[Exeunt severally.

SCENE, *outside view of a magnificent temple dedicated to Apollo; a flight of steps ascending to it; — clashing of swords is heard. — Ismena, in the greatest agitation, descends from the temple, and looks up towards Timanthes with the utmost fear and astonishment.*

ISMENA.

Where shall I fly! — Night stretch thy blackest wings
 And hide us from mankind — O! horror, horror!
 What demon urg'd this more than frantic deed!
 My love — Timanthes — Is there yet in heaven
 One pitying God that hears — on me, on me!
 Now let your justice fall — but spare Timanthes!
 O most unhappy!

Enter TIMANTHES from the temple, his sword drawn.

TIMANTHES.

Where's my life? — Ismena —
 Clasp'd in a husband's arms embrace thy safety.

ISMENA.

ISMENA.

Alas! what hast thou done? —

TIMANTHES.

Preserv'd Ismena!

ISMENA.

Preserv'd! but how preserv'd?

TIMANTHES.

Dispel thy fears,

Time presses — let us haste — but ha! a guard
 Advances yonder — where are now my friends?
 All moulder'd from me — be it so — this sword
 Shall singly force thy way —

*[going.]**Enter* CHERINTHUS.

Cherinthus here!

Art thou too arm'd against me!

CHERINTHUS.

O! Timanthes!

Know'st thou thy brother thus? Does this bespeak
 My enmity? *[embrace]* but haste, destruction now
 Pursues thee close — I came to warn thee hence —
 Demophoon is at hand.

TIMANTHES.

Thou art indeed

My friend, my brother —

CHERINTHUS.

Linger not — away,

While I remain to appease the king's resentment.

TIMANTHES.

Then let us hence —

[going.]

Enter on the other side DEMOPHOON, ADRASTUS,
 ORCANES, Priests and Guards.

DEMOPHOON.

Timanthes, stay! —

TIMANTHES:

TIMANTHES.

— My father!

DEMOPHOON.

Perfidious boy! [*Guards prepare to surround Ismena.*]

TIMANTHES.

Let none presume to approach,
My life shall guard Ismena.

ISMENA.

Urge not thus

Thy fate, see heaven itself declares against thee,
Then yield, in pity yield, and sheath thy sword.

DEMOPHOON.

Touch him not, guards, but give his madness way,
And let us see how far it can transport him!
Here let thy arm complete the glorious work
Thou hast but now begun, here in this bosom
Plunge deep thy steel — thou canst not tremble, traitor,
To pierce a father with the same right-hand
That in their fanes has dar'd insult the Gods!

TIMANTHES.

Some friendly mountain, with o'erwhelming shade,
Hide me from light and from a father's presence!

DEMOPHOON.

Why dost thou pause? Behold I offer here
Thy greatest foe defenceless to thy sword:
Now glut the secret hatred, that so long
Has rankled in thy breast — let me be punish'd
For giving birth to thee — thou want'st but little
To gain the prize of envy'd wickedness;
The glorious height's in view — it but remains
To plunge thy weapon in a parent's heart,
And give thy bloody hand to her thou lov'st.

TIMANTHES.

O! hold, my father, hold — those cruel words
 More sharp than daggers pierce my inmost soul!
 Low at your feet behold this guilty wretch,
 Behold this sword, the minister of rage,
 Now take it, search this breast, and free your son
 From life, but O! in pity speak not thus!

DEMOPHOON.

Had I not proofs so glaring of his perfidy
 He would seduce me — but I'll hear no more;
 Yield, impious, yield, submit thy rebel hands
 To slavish manacles.

TIMANTHES.

[*giving up his sword*] Where, where, my friends,
 Where are your chains? behold these ready hands,
 For never shall the son refuse to obey
 The mandates of a just, offended father.

DEMOPHOON.

Lead back the victim to the insulted god,
 Ye holy priests, and slay her in my presence:
 [*guards prepare to seize her; Timanthes snatches a sword
 from one of them.*] —

TIMANTHES.

He dies that touches her — off, off, ye slaves! —

DEMOPHOON.

Disarm him, guards! [Timanthes is disarmed.]

TIMANTHES.

[*To Ismena.*] I can no more defend thee!
 My king! my father!

DEMOPHOON.

Leave me!

H

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TIMANTHES:

ISMENA.

Yet, Demophoon,
 Thou may'st, without resentment, hear the suit
 Ismena makes, who fearless thus steps forth
 To welcome death — but O! forgive the prince,
 Whose partial warmth to assist a wretch's cause,
 The glorious weakness of heroic minds,
 Impell'd him to this fatal deed — behold
 What deep contrition now o'erspreads his soul;
 Hear then my last, my only prayer; complete
 The unfinish'd rites — lead me to sacrifice,
 And bless me with oblivion!

DEMOPHOON.

I must praise
 Thy generous fortitude — yes, hapless maid,
 Did not the powers profan'd demand atonement,
 My pity yet might save — but duty here,
 And fame forbid — conduct her to the temple.

TIMANTHES.

Shall it be said I saw Ismena slain!
 At least defer her fate — hear, reverend priests,
 My father, hear — Ismena cannot be
 The victim now requir'd — the sacrifice
 Would prove a profanation.

DEMOPHOON.

Ha! what mean'st thou!

TIMANTHES.

What does the god demand?

DEMOPHOON.

A virgin's blood.

A TRAGEDY.

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TIMANTHES.

Ismena must not then be led to death,
She's wedded — she's a mother — she's my wife !

DEMOPHOON.

What do I hear ! — suspend the rites, are these
The hopes I vainly form'd, perfidious son !
Respect'st thou thus divine and human laws,
And dost thou comfort thus thy father's age ?

ISMENA.

O mighty king ! before your sacred feet
Behold the cause of all — then from Timanthes
Avert your wrath, and let Ismena bear
The punishment ; 'tis I, and I alone
Am guilty — think that I, with artful wiles,
Seduc'd him first to love, that I enforc'd him
With frequent tears to these forbidden nuptials.

TIMANTHES.

Believe it not — she did not — no, by heaven,
The deed was mine alone — with all the warmth
Of unremitted love I still pursu'd her:
A thousand times she banish'd me her sight,
As often I return'd — I vow'd, intreated,
But all in vain, till frantic with despair
I menac'd with a desperate hand my life.

CHERINTHUS.

O ! sir, if e'er you held Cherinthus dear,
Let me now plead, nor plead in vain his pardon :
Extend your royal grace, and O ! restore
To me a brother, to yourself a son.

DEMOPHOON.

What means this softness that unmans me thus ?
Away —

ISMENA.

Yet hear, my lord — methinks I see
 Compassion dawning — O! look there, shall he,
 Who once was all your joy, now fail to move
 A father's pity? — Is he not your son?
 Were not his infant years your darling hope?
 Oft have I heard that, when in arms array'd,
 You fought the foe, you press'd his lips to yours,
 And, when you came victorious from the field,
 His tender kiss first welcom'd your return.

DEMOPHOON.

No more — I feel the mingled agony
 Of struggling passions labouring in my breast!
 But oh! Demophoon — think thou art a king,
 And let that thought confirm thee — yes, my soul,
 Be greatly wretched, but be greatly just! —
 Orcanes, see that these be kept apart —
 Cherinthus, let us hence, while to the temple
 These ministers of heaven retire to appease
 The angry pow'rs! —

*[Exeunt, on one side, Demophoon, Cherinthus,
 Adrastus, and part of the guards, while the priests
 ascend the steps, and enter the temple.]*

Manent Timanthes, Ismena, Orcanes, Guards.

ISMENA.

And must Ismena prove
 The bane of him whom more than life she loves?
 Is wretchedness the dowry which she brings?

TIMANTHES.

What shall I answer thee? — I cannot speak!
 These matchless proofs of unexampled love
 But fix new scorpions here! — have I not murder'd
 Thy peace, thy all — heap'd anguish and disgrace

On

On him who bred my youth to fame and greatness?
Good old Mathufius! —

ISMENA.

There indeed I feel
Distress anew — my father! —

TIMANTHES.

Now elate
With hope, he waits your coming, but in vain
The ready bark expects its lovely freight,
Which, but for me, had hence been borne in safety.
'Twas I oppos'd your flight — I fondly thought
That even the stern Demophoon must behold
My lov'd Ismena with a husband's eyes.

ISMENA.

Forbear to chide thyself — and heaven forbid
My thoughts should e'er reproach thee with the sufferings
That fate decrees us — yet thy words have rais'd
New scenes of tenderness — methinks I see
Mathufius, with a trembling heart, cast round
His longing looks, while as the wasting hour
Declines, his fears increase, till his poor bosom
Throbs with an anxious father's sharpest pangs.

TIMANTHES.

Think not I can forget his suffering age —
Some messenger shall to his ear convey
This day's events — Timanthes still has friends
That love their prince, and feel for his misfortunes.

ORCANES.

My lord, Arfetes with dispatch shall bear
Your tidings to Mathufius, this the king
Forbids not, and whate'er Orcanes can,
Which duty may permit, attends your will.

TIMAN-

TIMANTHES:

TIMANTHES.

I thank thee, good Orcanes — lead me now
To obey the king's command — farewell, Ismena,
And every guardian power descend to save us!

ISMENA.

Still, still I fear, but stand prepar'd for all —
Yet one reflection sheds a healing balm
On my torn mind, to think I may again
Hang on his reverend neck — O! thou whose goodness
Shall bear Timanthes' greeting to Mathufius,
Hear now a daughter's voice — tell him, Ismena
Waits with a fond impatience to behold
His venerable face, while join'd to mine
His cheeks shall mingle sorrows, as his lips
Pronounce their blessing, and confirm my pardon,
For every anguish that his age endures.

TIMANTHES.

Thou brightest excellence — and shall not heaven
Protect that virtue it inspir'd — my soul
Revives with hope — we yet may meet again —
Mathufius shall return; who knows what here
His presence may avail — all, all shall join
To win Demophoon's grace — once more, farewell
My life — Ismena — [embrace.

ISMENA.

Words are poor to speak
The tumult struggling here — let this speak for me
And sum up all in silence. [embrace.

*Exit Timanthes guarded.**Manent ISMENA, Guards.*

Yes — he's gone!
And at his parting resolution now
Ebbs out apace, while in its stead a crowd

Of

Of tender images — wife! daughter! mother!
 Olinthus — O! that lov'd idea still
 Clings round my heart — but look Cephisa comes
 Once more to share in sufferings not her own!

Enter CEPHISA.

CEPHISA.

Art thou Ismena, she for whom so late
 My bosom bled? And may I now believe
 The mouth of fame that speaks thee yet more wretched
 Than when I saw thee led to death, that speaks
 Of secret nuptials, of a broken union,
 And all the woes that wait thy hapless love?

ISMENA.

Alas! Cephisa, I am one whom fortune
 Has singled for her frowns, one whom in vain
 The hand of goodness would preserve from ruin;
 Whom even Cephisa's pity cannot save —
 And yet too generous princefs —

CEPHISA.

No, Ismena,
 As yet perhaps all is not lost — the power
 That watches o'er the unhappy still may hear thee:
 Demophoon has confess'd that nature's plea
 Is strongly for Timanthes, that his soul
 Is rent with passions, while by turns the judge,
 By turns the father sways: the public eye
 Confirm'd the wavering king; but now, retir'd
 Within himself, the parent must prevail.
 Then speak, O speak, and ease thy swelling heart,
 Methinks I see distraction labouring there!
 And as but now thy eyes encounter'd mine,
 The tear, that stood till then suppress'd, gush'd forth.
 Give words to all the pangs a wife can feel,
 To all a mother's anguish.

ISMENA.

ISMENA.

Thou hast touch'd me

Too nearly there — I am indeed a mother —

Here, here his image dwells — and O! Cephisa,

Could I but hope, and yet I wrong thy virtues,

We have a son, the dear, the only offspring

Of our ill-omen'd loves — his innocence

Alas! is guiltless of his parent's deeds —

Could I but once more clasp him to my breast —

Thy goodness might intreat the king —

CEPHISA.

And will

Ismena — yes, by all the virtuous grief

Of sympathy, when for another's woe

The generous bosom feels, I'll seek Demophoon,

And urge thy suit with friendship's kindest warmth.

Perhaps yet more — but rest assur'd, Ismena,

Thus much at least Cephisa can obtain,

To give thy little fondling to thy arms,

To shed soft comfort on thy lonely hours,

To calm thy troubled breast and sooth thy cares! [Exit.

Manent ISMENA, *Guards.*

Conduct me now, where I may patient wait

What yet remains to suffer, while I count

Each tardy moment till Olinthus comes!

And he will come — Cephisa has pronounc'd it —

My heart already meets him — lead me, friends,

To prison! — no — the mind, still uncontroll'd,

Knows no confinement — to a place of sorrow!

O! no — that cannot be, when my Olinthus,

Love's dearest pledge, shall smile away distress

Even in the dungeon's gloom — the thought alone

Wings my rapt soul, and lightens every pain!

[Exit guarded.]

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT

ACT V.

SCENE, *A prison.*

ISMENA *seated*, OLINTHUS *asleep by her*, *Attendant.*

ISMENA.

ALREADY hush'd in slumber! — O! sleep on,
 Dear guiltless babe! these rugged walls to thee,
 Are as the costly arras that surrounds
 A prince's chamber, and the solemn clank
 Of these rude chains, is as the music's note
 To lull thee to thy rest — Where is my love,
 My lord Timanthes? — Gracious powers! assist him,
 And reconcile his soul to life and happiness!
 He must, he shall — but look, Ianthe, see
 My poor Olinthus smiles — blest omen sure
 Of his lov'd father's fortune — happy state,
 Of childish innocence — ha! smile again!
 Thou dear resemblance of thy hapless sire,
 His little self! — O! I could gaze for ever,
 'Till all the mother, 'wakening in my soul,
 Would fix me down to life, to life and thee!

Enter DEMOPHOON and CEPHISA.

CEPHISA.

Behold, Demophoon, where reclin'd she hangs
 O'er her young son; the silent mourner weeps
 In heart-felt anguish — claims not this the tear
 Of sympathizing sorrow?

DEMOPHOON.

Yes, Cephisa,

My breast has caught th' infection — and behold
 Lost in herself she heeds us not, do thou
 Speak comfort to her woes.

CEPHISA.

[going towards Ismena.]

Ismena —

ISMENA.

Ha!

Cephisa! — like some guardian spirit still
 Thou hover'ft round me — yet can grief retire,
 Where goodness such as thine will not pursue?
 To thee a mother owes this dear embrace!
 But O! what do I see, Demophoon here!
 Ah! sir, what means this visit? Com'ft thou now
 To give my sorrows peace? 'Tis but a moment
 That severs life and wretchedness, and, Oh!
 Would the same lips that seal Ismena's doom,
 Restore Timanthes to a father's love,
 To life — to pardon — [kneels.]

DEMOPHOON.

Rise —

ISMENA.

Still let me kneel,

'Tis for Timanthes — wherefore dost thou turn
 Thy face to hide the starting tear — O! think,
 You see him banish'd from a father's sight,
 A wretched prisoner — yet, you answer not —
 O speak! — Olinthus! look he wakes — Ianthe,
 Haste, bring him, he shall plead his father's cause:
 Come, little suppliant, see, Demophoon, see,
 Mark but his looks, they cannot plead in vain —
 He is your own, whate'er his mother's guilt,
 Your royal blood flows in his infant veins,
 Think that in him your once-lov'd son implores,
 And in Olinthus now behold Timanthes.

DEMOPHOON.

This is too much — O! rise — my daughter rise,
 And in a parent's arms forget thy sufferings.

ISMENA.

ISMENA.

What do I hear!

DEMOPHOON.

Thy virtues have aton'd

For all that's past — Timanthes shall again

Be thine — Olinthus too — at once we'll bless

The husband and the father.

CEPHISA.

Why, Ismena,

Art thou still silent — see'st thou not that heaven

Crowns every hope Cephisa wish'd to raise?

And dost thou yet distrust the flattering scene?

Dispel thy doubts —

ISMENA.

And shall I then forget

These dreams of grief and terror! — let us leave

In these abodes the phantoms of despair,

And haste to life, to rapture, and Timanthes!

[Exeunt.]

SCENE, *another part of the prison.*TIMANTHES *alone.*

Why should we covet life? What are its charms,

Since all degrees are wretched? Every state

Partakes of misery: in infancy

We tremble at a frown; in ripening youth

We're made the sport of fortune and of love:

In age we groan beneath the weight of years:

Now we're tormented with the thirst of gain,

And now the fear of loss: eternal war

The wicked with themselves maintain; the just

With fraud and envy: all our schemes are shadow,

Vain and illusive as a sick man's dream,

TIMANTHES:

And when we but begin at last to know
Our life's whole folly, death cuts short the scene.

Enter CHERINTHUS.

CHERINTHUS.

Where is my friend, my brother! *[embrace.]*

TIMANTHES.

Ha! Cherinthus,
Are these the tears due to a brother's death,
When thus you press me with a last embrace?

CHERINTHUS.

What last embrace, what tears, what death, Timantes!
Still live, and still be blest'd — these hands shall loose
Thy galling chains, these lips shall breathe the sound
Of life and happiness.

TIMANTHES.

Is't possible!

CHERINTHUS.

Our father now relents; the holy priests
With due libations have appeas'd the powers,
And purg'd the fane from sacrilegious guilt:
A powerful advocate asserts thy cause —

TIMANTHES.

What tongue will plead for me, a wretched outcast
Of heaven and earth!

CHERINTHUS.

Cephisa —

TIMANTHES.

Ha! Cephisa!
She whom my scorn offended!

CHERINTHUS.

Not alone
For thee she pleads — She pleads Ismena's cause —

TIMANTHES.

For my Ismena! — breath of gods inspire
 Her lips with eloquence! — O! my Cherinthus!
 Should heaven propitious now — but O! I feel
 A father's anguish here — couldst thou for me
 Discharge his promise to the Phrygian king,
 Give, in my stead, thy hand to fair Cephisa —

CHERINTHUS.

I own my soul has long ador'd Cephisa;
 I love her with the tenderest passion, yet
 I must not hope the princess e'er will deign
 To accept my hand: thou know'st she came to wed
 The kingdom's heir —

TIMANTHES.

Is this the only bar?
 Then she is yours — I here renounce my claim
 To Thrace, to empire.

CHERINTHUS.

Whither would Timanthes!

TIMANTHES.

Away, and seek the king; tell him, Cherinthus
 Will from dishonour save the Thracian name:
 O! fly, and with a brother's speed return,
 My all depends on this eventful hour!
 [Exit Cherinthus.

TIMANTHES *alone.*

Indulgent power! methinks my heart dilates
 With new-reviving joy! shall I once more
 Without a pang embrace my wife and son!

Enter MATHUSIUS with a paper.

MATHUSIUS.

Timanthes! O! ill fated prince!

TIMANTHES:

TIMANTHES.

Mathufius!

Thou know'st not what has chanc'd; the pitying hand
Of heaven even yet may save us, bring once more
Thy daughter to my arms —

MATHUSIUS.

Forbid it nature,
That thou should'st e'er embrace Ismena more!

TIMANTHES.

What means Mathufius? — speak —

MATHUSIUS.

Fate has unveil'd

A dreadful secret — and Ismena —

TIMANTHES.

Ha!

Say, what of her?

MATHUSIUS.

She is — Timanthes' sister.

TIMANTHES.

My sister! — what delusion —

MATHUSIUS.

No, Timanthes,

Too certain are the proofs.

TIMANTHES.

'Tis madness all —

Take heed, old man, my love can brook but ill
The dreams of doating age.

MATHUSIUS.

Unhappy youth!

Hear then the dreadful tale — when late for flight
I gather'd all my treasures to the shore,
I found a casket, that had lain conceal'd

E'er

E'er since I lost the partner of my bed:
 Doubtless thou oft hast heard Barcene bore
 Such faithful friendship to the queen deceas'd,
 Our king's first consort, that the day which saw
 Argea's death, beheld Barcene's too.

TIMANTHES.

I know it well —

MATHUSIUS.

This casket by Argea
 Was trusted to Barcene, which contain'd
 This paper, written by the queen's own hand.

TIMANTHES.

What paper? ha! —

MATHUSIUS.

Now mark the fatal scroll! [reads.

" Ismena is not daughter to Mathufius,
 " But owes her birth to me and to Demophoon,
 " By what event her fortune has been chang'd,
 " Another mystic paper must disclose;
 " Let this be fought for in the household temple,
 " Beneath the footstool of the god.

" ARGEA."

TIMANTHES.

Imposture all! —

MATHUSIUS.

Behold the royal signet — [gives the paper.

TIMANTHES.

What, say'st thou! Oh! [drops the paper.

MATHUSIUS.

My prince —

TIMANTHES.

Away, Mathufius!

TIMANTHES:

MATHUSIUS.

I dare not leave thee thus —

TIMANTHES.

I charge thee hence,

Thou minister of fate — haste to the temple,
And open all this tale of guilt and horror!

MATHUSIUS.

Yes, I must go — but O! ye pitying powers,
Look down, and send some messenger of peace
To guard him in this hour of dreadful trial. [Exit.]TIMANTHES *alone.*

Heaven hears him not — a night of black despair
 For ever wraps me round — Olinthus now
 Nephew and son! Ismena wife and sister!
 Detested union! horrible to thought!
 Fly, fly, Timanthes, hide thee from mankind,
 Thou now must prove thy father's curse — behold
 The furies here reviv'd of Thebes and Argos!
 O! that these eyes had never seen Ismena!
 What then I deem'd the violence of love
 Was nature's secret force — what sound was that!

Enter DEMOPHOON and CHERINTHUS.

My father! — hide me earth! —

DEMOPHOON.

My dearest son,

In these lov'd arms —

TIMANTHES.

Forbear — no more Demophoon
 Must call Timanthes by that tender name.

DEMOPHOON.

Perhaps thou know'st not —

T I -

TIMANTHES.

O! I know too much —

DEMOPHOON.

I come to chace the clouds of black despair —
 Thy faults are now forgiven — and once again
 Ismena shall be thine — Still art thou silent!
 Receive this dear embrace, thy pledge of pardon —
 But say — why dost thou fly thy father's sight?

TIMANTHES.

I dare not look on thee —

Enter ISMENA, OLINTHUS, and Attendant.

ISMENA.

My lord, my husband!

TIMANTHES.

Away and leave me.

ISMENA.

Ha! what means my love!

Are we not one? Has not relenting fate
 Unravell'd all our sorrows? — this blest hour
 Indulgent heaven restores thee to Ismena,
 And dost thou welcome thus —

TIMANTHES.

Oh! —

DEMOPHOON.

Speak, Timantes —

TIMANTHES.

I cannot speak — Ah! whither shall I fly
 To hide —

DEMOPHOON.

Whom flyst thou from?

K

TIMAN-

TIMANTHES:

TIMANTHES.

From men and gods!
 From you and from myself — to solitude,
 Where my remembrance may be lost for ever!

CHERINTHUS.

'Tis frenzy all! — Hast thou forgot each name
 That wakes the soul to tenderness — behold
 Thy brother here, thy son —

ISMENA.

Behold thy wife,
 Who thus adjures thee by each thought, that now
 Should fill thy breast, to hear and pity her!
 Or if thy wife must plead in vain, yet hear
 In this poor innocent the voice of nature —
 What has he done, that thou should'st cast him off?
 He never could offend — why dost thou shun
 His harmless looks? — O! take him to thy bosom —
 Now, by this hand — you shall not wrest it from me —
 Once the dear pledge of happiness —

TIMANTHES.

No more —
 Thou rend'st my heart — wife, father, son, and brother,
 Are names of transport to a mind at ease,
 To me they're sounds of horror! — take, O! take
 That infant from my sight — his presence starts
 A thousand dreadful thoughts — art thou not chang'd?
 Dost thou not shudder — hear then, wretched woman!
 Thou art — I cannot speak it — O, Ismena! [Exit.

ISMENA.

Stay, stay, Timanthes, if I must be wretched,
 Thy lips shall seal my doom —

DEMOPHOON.

Cherinthus, go —

Pursue

Pursue thy brother's steps, and learn the cause
Of this mysterious grief — [Exit Cherinthus.

I S M E N A.

And is he gone?
Did he not cast me from his lov'd embrace?
Did he not spurn Olinthus from his arms?
Some horrid secret! — O! what art thou, great
Mysterious evil! that in darkness hid,
Gives double terror — but I'll seek Timanthes,
Nor leave him till I share in all he suffers!

[Exeunt Ism. Olin. and Attendant.

Enter A D R A S T U S.

A D R A S T U S.

The sacred pontiff now requests your presence
To meet Mathusius in the household temple,
On some important business that regards
Your house's honour, and the kingdom's weal.

D E M O P H O O N.

To meet Mathusius! — let us hence, Adrastus,
And learn what yet remains for suffering Thrace. [Exeunt.

SCENE, *The palace.*

Enter T I M A N T H E S and C H E R I N T H U S.

T I M A N T H E S.

Away, Cherinthus — wilt thou follow still
These steps accurst — what would'st thou more of horror?
Leave, leave me to my woes —

C H E R I N T H U S.

O! yield not thus
To madness of despair — thou art indeed
Unhappy, but the hand of fate alone
Has driven thee down this precipice of ruin;
Thy blameless thoughts —

TIMANTHES.

No more, no more, Cherinthus,
 Nought can extenuate — have I not destroy'd
 A father's peace, and stain'd a royal race
 With blackest infamy — by horrid love
 Impell'd, did I not trample on the laws,
 And leap the bound, that seem'd by heaven design'd
 To stop the dreadful union — has not rage
 Urg'd these destructive hands — hold, hold, reflection —
 Incest and sacrilege —

CHERINTHUS.

Now by the love

You bear Cherinthus, by those awful powers
 That view the foul's recess, whose justice marks
 The deed of hood-wink'd fate from the black dye
 Of voluntary guilt, whose pity still
 May sooth thy future life —

TIMANTHES.

My future life! —

Shall I then live to aggravate my crime!
 To love — for, O! with horror I confess
 I cannot shake Ismena from my soul —
 Here, here she dwells — nor can this awful moment
 Raze from my breast the husband and the father,
 It will not be — one way — [draws a dagger.]

CHERINTHUS.

Hold, hold, my brother —

What would'st thou do?

MATHUSIUS.

[within.]

Give, give him to my arms —

Enter MATHUSIUS.

Timanthes! my Timanthes! Oh! —

[embrace.]

T I -

TIMANTHES.

Mathufius!

Why wilt thou save a wretch that must not live?
Away —

MATHUSIUS.

O! thou art innocent — Demophoon
Gave thee not birth — but I — I am thy father —

TIMANTHES.

Thou! — gracious heaven! Is not Ismena then
My sister — Speak, Mathufius —

ISMENA.

[*entering.*] Let me fly
To greet him with the sound of love and joy.

Enter ISMENA, CEPHISA, and OLINTHUS.

Yes, I will hold him ever to my heart!
Timanthes! 'tis too much — hence every vain
And busy fear that frights thee from my arms!
No sister now — no rigid laws oppose
Our union more; Demophoon has confirm'd
Our mutual bliss, and universal Thrace
Shall now be witness to my boundless love!

TIMANTHES.

And is it given me then to clasp thee thus!
To gaze with guiltless transport! — speak, my friends,
It cannot be — o'erwhelm'd but now with horrors —

Enter DEMOPHOON with a paper, and ADRASTUS.

O royal sir! and may I then believe
These blest events — and is Ismena sprung
From your illustrious race — and may I now
Indulge the fond Idea —

DEMOPHOON.

Yes, Timanthes,
This has unravell'd all — from yonder fane

I bring

I bring this scroll, which has dispell'd the fears
Which first Mathusius rais'd.

TIMANTHES.

All-gracious Heaven!

DEMOPHOON.

Thou wert exchange'd an infant for Ismena;
Argea, baffled in her hopes to give
An heir to Thrace, first by Arsene's birth,
And next Ismena's, from Mathusius' wife
Receiv'd, and gave thee to me as her own:
But verging on the brink of life, she left
A paper with Barcene, to produce,
If aught of danger should attend Ismena,
That paper which Mathusius gave thee first,
While in the household temple she dispos'd
This second scroll which has reveal'd thy birth.

TIMANTHES.

Then am I happy still — O! sacred sir!
Forgive each rebel act — but 'twas a cause
Might surely plead — 'twas your Ismena —

DEMOPHOON.

Rise,

Come to my arms and be again my son,
This cancels all —

[embrace.]

CEPHISA.

[*leading Olinthus to him.*] See, see, Timanthes, one
Who claims your dearest care — behold him now —
Look how he reaches out his little hands
To clasp a father's knees, and meet his blessing.

TIMANTHES.

Thy mother's joy! — Olinthus —

ISMENA.

Yes, Timanthes,
It is Olinthus, whom but late you spurn'd

From

From your embrace — you spurn'd Ismena too —
 And will you shun me still — no, no, Timanthes,
 I have thee here — my beating heart confesses
 Its wonted guest — O! we will part no more!
 Our sufferings past shall be the grateful theme
 Of many a future hour — Olinthus oft
 Shall listen to our talk, and while he dwells
 With infant wonder on his parents' story,
 Drop the young tear of pity from his eye,
 Cling to our breasts, and pay for all our sorrows.

TIMANTHES.

[to Cher.] My brother! still that tender name is ours,
 'Twas doubtless heaven inspir'd me to resign
 The birthright I usurp'd — receive thy own.

MATHUSIUS.

Take back, my fate, what now remains of life,
 For nothing more is worth an old man's care?

DEMOPHOON.

Mathusius, yes — thou still hast days of joy:
 Here let oblivion's veil conceal the past;
 We both have been to blame — see in Timanthes
 The innocent usurper: thus we stand
 Deliver'd from the annual sacrifice;
 Cherinthus shall succeed — in him, Cephisa,
 Behold the kingdom's heir — but this glad hour
 Demands that tribute which the tongue of praise
 Owes to that ruling Power who governs all!

END of the FIFTH ACT.

EPILOGUE.

E P I L O G U E.

Written by GEORGE COLMAN, Esq;

Spoken by Mrs. BULKLEY.

WHAT horrors fill the tragic poet's brain!
Plague, murder, rape, and incest, crowd his train;
He pants for miseries, delights in ills,
The blood of fathers, mothers, children, spills;
Stabs, poisons, massacres; and, in his rage,
With daggers, bowls, and carpets, strews the stage.

Our gentle poet, in his opera tried,
Italian clovers, singing in his head,
Winds up a tedious round the fine drawn tale,
And roars — but roars like any nightingale.

Woman, whate'er she be — maid, widow, wife,
A quiet woman is the heart of life;
And sure, Gephira was a gentle creature,
Full of the milk and honey of domestic life;
Sought for a spouse — by spouse refus'd!
Was ever maid so shamefully abus'd?
And yet, alas, poor prince! I could not blame him —
One wife, I knew, was full enough to tame him.
Himena, and Timanthes, and Olinthus,
Might all be happy — for I chose Cherinthus.

But what a barbarous law was that of Thrace!
How cruel *there* was each young lady's case!
A virgin, plac'd upon the treasure roll,
A hapless virgin must have stood the while,
But by Timanthes made a lucky bride,
Himena prudently *disqualify'd*.

Ladies, to you alone our author tues;
'Tis yours to cheer, or condemn his muse.
The theatre's a mirror, and each play
Should be a very looking-glass, they say;
His looking-glass reflects no moles or pimples,
But shews you full of graces, smiles, and dimples.
If you approve yourselves, resolve to spare,
And, critics! then attack him, if ye dare.

F I N I S.



Ex. p. 48
Verbinden